

The Bahá'í Faith

'Abdu'l-Baha	Eldest son of Baha'u'llah and named as His successor. Knighted by King George V. The perfect exemplar of the Bahá'í way of life.
Administrative Order	The organisation of the Baha'í Faith, which has developed according to the principles and framework revealed in the Holy Writings , with freely-elected (by secret ballot) administrative bodies at the local, national and international levels. There are no clergy in the Baha'í Faith, and self-promotion or electioneering is prohibited.
Ali Muhammad, Siyyid	The actual name of the Báb
Arc, the	The buildings of the Bahá'í World Centre , arranged in an arc, on Mount Carmel .
Ayyam-i-Ha	The 'Intercalary Days', falling on the last 4 days of February (5 in a leap year) before the last month of the Bahá'í year, and given over to preparation for the annual Fast , hospitality, feasting and gift-giving.
Báb, the	'The Gate'. Title assumed by Siyyid Ali Muhammad (1819-1850) the Forerunner of Baha'u'llah and Prophet-Founder of the Bábi Faith.
Bábi	A follower of the Báb .
Backbiting	Saying mean or spiteful things about a person behind their back. Forbidden by Baha'u'llah in His Book of Laws (Kitab-i-Aqdas).
Bahá'í	A follower of Baha'u'llah .
Bahá'í Calendar	A solar calendar of 19 months of 19 days, with 4 Intercalary days (5 in a leap year) before the final month. New Year's day (Naw Ruz) is at the Spring Equinox, usually March 21. The Bahá'í day begins and ends at sunset.

Bahá'í Community	A congregation of Baha'is at a local, national or world-wide level, reflecting the ideal of Baha'í collective life.
Bahá'í World Centre	The spiritual and administrative centre of the Baha'í Faith, consisting of the Shrine of Baha'u'llah at Bahji [the Qiblah]; the Shrine of the Bab in Haifa (which includes the Shrine of 'Abdu'l-Baha); and various other buildings in the Haifa-Akka region of northern Israel.
Baha'u'llah	'The Glory of God'. Title of Mirza Husayn-Ali (1817-1892). Prophet-Founder of the Bahá'í Faith and the Manifestation of God for this day.
Burial Ring	Ring placed on the finger of the deceased as part of the preparations for burial, and inscribed: 'I came forth from God, and return unto Him, detached from all save Him, holding fast to His name, the Merciful, the Compassionate'.
Community School	A school for children of all ages delivering Baha'í education, and usually held weekly.
Consultation	A form of discussion between individuals and within groups. The method used by Bahá'is for decision-making within their administrative bodies. According to Bahá'í writings, it requires the "...subjugation of all egotism and unruly passions, the cultivation of frankness and freedom of thought as well as courtesy, openness of mind, and wholehearted acquiescence in a majority decision."
Covenant, the	In general, the eternal promise of God towards mankind to bestow bounties in return for recognition of His Messengers and obedience to His Laws.
Fast, the	A period of meditation, prayer and spiritual renewal, involving abstinence from food and drink between the hours of sunrise and sunset. It takes place every year

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	in the last month of the Bahá’i calendar .		
God	God in essence is unknowable, being exalted above human attributes and understanding. Knowledge of God is through His Manifestations or Messengers who reflect His attributes [All-Knowing, Almighty, Ever-Forgiving, Most Compassionate etc.]	House of Worship	Mashriqu’l-Adhkar [‘Dawning-place of the mention of God’]; Baha’i temple: at present there are 7 - Illinois USA, Kampala Uganda, Sydney Australia, Frankfurt Germany, Panama City Panama, Apia Samoa and New Dehli India; each has a distinctive architectural style echoing local culture, but with certain features in common [9 sided, central auditorium (no pulpit or altar)] and intended solely for the worship of God; open to all of any religion.
Greatest Name of God, the	According to Islamic belief God has 99 names (compassionate, merciful, etc.), and there is a hundredth name – ‘the greatest name’ – which has special potency. For Bahá’is this is ‘Baha’ (glory), as used in the religious title of their Founder Baha’u’llah .	Huququ’llah	The ‘Right of God’: monetary payment to be made to the centre of the Faith, as a spiritual obligation, and once a person’s excess assets exceed a certain amount. The payment is not solicited; it is entirely the business of each Baha’i to follow this obligation established in the Kitab-i-Aqdas . The payment is not considered acceptable to God unless it is offered in a spirit of joy.
Guardian, the	Shoghi Effendi, grandson to ‘Abdu’l-Baha, and chosen by him to be his successor, as ‘Guardian’ of the Cause of God.		
Haifa	City by which Baha’u’llah was first brought to Israel as a prisoner in 1868, which He visited 3 times in later life, and where He revealed instructions for the establishment of the Bahá’i World Centre .	Husayn-Aliy-i-Nuri, Mirza	The actual name of Baha’u’llah
Hidden Words of Baha’u’llah, the	A collection of short verse-like passages revealed by Baha’u’llah in Baghdad in 1858, some in Arabic and some in Persian, concerning subjects such as the relationship between God and humanity.	Kitab-i-Aqdas	The Most Holy Book, Baha’u’llah’s Book of Laws, revealed in Akka, Palestine, in 1873, which He commanded to be implemented gradually with tact and wisdom, as some of its provisions clearly point to a future society very different from that of today.
Holy Day	Baha’is have nine Holy Days on which significant events in the Faith are commemorated, and which occur at set times during the year.	Local Spiritual Assembly; LSA	Baha’i administrative council of nine persons elected by secret ballot in any locality where there are at least nine Baha’is over the age of 21. The LSA is elected at Ridvan , and has responsibility for the activities and spiritual welfare of the local community.
Holy Land	The land of Israel, Holy to four religions, including the Bahá’i Faith.		
Holy Writings	The Word of God as revealed to the Báb and Baha’u’llah . Unlike these, the writings of ‘Abdu’l-Baha are not regarded as divinely revealed, but are included as ‘sacred scripture’.	Martyr	Originally, in both English and Arabic, witness: one who bears witness to a belief by submitting to death rather renouncing their faith. There were many thousands of Babi martyrs in the time of the Báb , and Bahá’is are

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	still put to death today for refusing to recant.		
Meditation	No formal system of meditation; usually consists of individual contemplation of the Word of God, often in a state of prayer.		which they should be said. The prayer is one of the few associated with simple rituals: preceded by ablutions and recited standing facing in the direction of the Qiblah , in private.
Messengers of God	Also called Manifestations of God, these are special beings who reflect the attributes of God and reveal His message to mankind. They include Adam, Moses, the Buddha, Jesus, Muhammad, and more recently the Bab and Baha'u'llah .	Pilgrimage	A journey made to a Shrine or Holy Place. At the present time Bahá'í pilgrimage consists of visiting the Shrines of the Báb and Baha'u'llah in and around Haifa , Israel.
Mount Carmel	The mountain spoken of by Isaiah as the 'mountain of the Lord'. Site of the Bahá'í World Centre , including several Bahá'í Holy Places such as the Shrine of the Báb .	Progressive Revelation	Baha'i doctrine relating the various recognised world religions as different stages in the evolution of one religion. The Baha'i Faith is regarded as the latest (but not the last) of these. Each Manifestation of God brings divine teachings appropriate for the spiritual capacity of the people of the day, but always including the same moral and spiritual truths.
Naw Ruz	'New Day'. The Bahá'í New Year. It occurs on the Spring Equinox, usually March 21. This festival marks the end of the Fast and is a time of joyous celebration.	Qiblah	The 'point of adoration' to which believers turn in prayer; for Bahá'is this is the Shrine (tomb) of Baha'u'llah near Haifa
Nine-pointed star	Has become a symbol of the Bahá'í Faith (like the crescent for Islam); the number nine as the highest single digit symbolizes unity, perfection and comprehensiveness; the numerical equivalent of 'Baha' is 9, and there are 9 members on each Spiritual Assembly, the Houses of Worship are 9-sided representing the 9 major religions of the world.	Revelation	The transmission of the Word of God through His Messengers , as 'revealed' teachings or verses. These were written down either by Baha'u'llah Himself, or by His amanuensis and checked by Baha'u'llah for accuracy later.
Nineteen Day Feast	The principal gathering of Bahá'is of a particular locality. The Nineteen Day Feast is, ideally, held on the first day of the Bahá'í month and brings together the members of the Bahá'í community for three clearly defined purposes: worship, consultation and fellowship.	Ridvan	Holy Day (21 April) marking the day of Baha'u'llah's declaration of His mission [also the name of the garden in Baghdad in which He made His announcement to some of His followers. This day has been chosen as the day on which most Baha'i elections take place.
Obligatory Prayers	Prescribed by Baha'u'llah in the Kitab-i-Aqdas , Bahá'is may choose from one of three versions of the prayer which differ in length and the time at	Shrine	Special buildings containing the remains of the central figures of the Baha'i Faith [the Shrines of the Bab and Baha'u'llah are places of pilgrimage] and so having special spiritual significance.

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Siyah-Chal	The 'Black Pit' or underground dungeon in which Baha'u'llah and other Babis were imprisoned in 1852. In this place, Baha'u'llah first received His mission.
Summer School	'School' focusing on Baha'i education for all ages, with talks, workshops, classes etc.; often held over a period of a few days in summer [depending on demand, there may also be 'Spring' and 'Winter' schools]
Tablet	Divinely revealed scripture. Used in the title of certain Writings revealed by Baha'u'llah and ' Abdu'l-Baha .
Tablet of Visitation, the	Special prayer revealed by Baha'u'llah , which is said when visiting the Shrines, and on certain Holy Days .
Unity in Diversity	Baha'i concept promoting harmony without uniformity.
Universal House of Justice; UHJ	The Supreme administrative body of the Baha'i Faith, first elected in 1963, and thereafter every 5 years. The UHJ has authority to legislate on matters not already determined by the Holy Writings .
World Peace	A fundamental principle of Bahá'i social teaching, the achievement of which is the primary mission of the Bahá'i Faith